

STATE BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION NO. I-09-00

February 29, 2000

The following is offered in response to your letter in which you request a formal interpretation of Section 1304.18 of the 1996 International Mechanical Code portion of the 1999 State Building Code.

Question: Does an existing gas piping system that has been inactive for an unknown period of time require an inspection by the municipal building official prior to being re-energized?

Answer: No. The visual inspection and pressure testing to insure that gas piping is gas-tight that is required by Section 1304.18 of the above referenced code is only required after initial installation, alteration, addition or repair to a fuel-gas piping system. This code section also provides a reference to the testing and inspection procedures found in NFPA 54-1992. Section 4.1.1 of the NFPA 54 standard requires (at subsection a) inspection and testing prior to acceptance and initial operation and (at subsection c) in the event of repairs or additions to the piping system. That is the end of the municipal building official's responsibilities for testing and inspection of fuel-gas piping systems absent an unsafe condition needing investigation. Section 4.2.1 of the NFPA 54 standard states in part that before gas is introduced into a new system or into an existing system after being shut off, the entire system shall be inspected to determine that there are no open fittings or ends and that all manual valves at outlets on equipment are closed and all unused valves at outlets are closed and plugged or capped. This inspection, when employed in the event of a fuel-gas shut off, can be performed by the utility responsible for re-energizing the gas service and need not involve the municipal building official. There is no need for a municipal building official to inspect a fuel-gas piping system simply because such service has been discontinued for a period of time. Such inspection is only required for new installation, alteration, addition, repair or in the event of an unsafe condition.